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SUBJECT: DARFUR: SPLM OUTLINES CONFERENCE STRUCTURE

Summary

¶ 11. (SBU) In a meeting with donor governments, regional representatives, and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Taskforce on Darfur, Secretary General Pagan Amum emphasized that the SPLM would play a facilitation not a mediation role in the Darfur political process and outlined three-phases to the proposed conference in Southern Sudan. Amum made a strong appeal to the international community to provide financial support for the SPLM conference. He endorsed the efforts of the Center of Humanitarian Dialogue to organize the remnants of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and called on the UN and AU and the leaders of the "regional initiative"--Chad, Libya, and Eritrea--to harmonize their efforts.
End summary.

SPLM to Facilitate, Not Mediate

¶ 12. (SBU) Chairing a preparatory meeting for the SPLM's conference on the Darfur political process, SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum emphasized that his party intended to prepare the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) non-signatories for negotiations with the National Congress Party (NCP) but would not serve in a mediation role. In attendance were members of the SPLM Taskforce on Darfur (TFD); Minister for Regional Cooperation in the Government of Southern Sudan Benjamin Maril Barnabas; representatives of the U.S., the Netherlands, France, Norway, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Egypt; and two members of the UN/AU Joint Mediation Support Team (JMST). Amum explained that the SPLM had long advocated for the marginalized people of Sudan, including those of Darfur, and was "not neutral." As a member of the Government of National Unity (GNU), however, the SPLM was in a unique position to facilitate the peace process. According to Amum, the SPLM recognized that the Darfur conflict was destabilizing Sudan and jeopardizing the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). He noted that pressure was mounting on the National Congress Party (NCP) as a result of the Darfur crisis and the NCP was reacting poorly. He cited the recent imposition of U.S. sanctions. "They are complicating the situation in our country," said Amum, adding that U.S. sanctions affect "the whole country."

A Conference in Three Phases

¶ 13. (SBU) Describing the SPLM's facilitation role in the Darfur peace process, Amum outlined a three-phase approach for the conference in Southern Sudan. The first phase will target representatives of both the DPA signatory and non-signatory movements, civil society

activists, "native administration representatives," and the Arab tribes, including, in the words of one TFD member, the "Janjaweed." Amum stated that the objective will be to create "a popular trend in support of a comprehensive resolution of the conflict" and to "affirm negotiations as the best way forward."

¶4. (SBU) The second phase will focus on the Darfur rebel movements, including both the DPA signatories and non-signatories. The SPLM will ascertain the reasons some factions refused to sign the agreement and identify which portions of the DPA that the signatories were willing to adjust. Amum underscored that the SPLM will use the second phase to: 1) Emphasize that the rebel movements should not "reinvent the wheel" and begin negotiations from the beginning, and 2) Final status negotiations should be efficient and focused. "The parties should not be allowed to open a Pandora's box," said Amum.

¶5. (SBU) In the third phase, the SPLM will work with the non-signatories to develop common negotiating positions. The SPLM will assist the non-signatories in determining the "minimum positions" necessary to opt for the political process instead of war. While acknowledging that the non-signatories will find some positions difficult to concede based on their constituencies, the SPLM would work to bring the rebel factions "down to earth" and discuss realistic expectations for the outcome of negotiations.

¶6. (SBU) Throughout the three-phased conference in Southern Sudan, SPLM leaders will utilize their experience in negotiation developed during the North/South war and in the talks that culminated in the CPA. Parallel to the conference, the SPLM will also press the NCP leadership to make a serious commitment to resolve the Darfur crisis. Amum hoped that these discussions would convince the NCP to be "prepared and positioned to be reasonable" or risk "bringing down their own country."

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¶7. (SBU) Amum echoed TFD members requests for international funding for the Southern Sudan meeting, explaining that the SPLM had funded the Taskforce's activities to date. Though the conference is scheduled to begin on June 18, organizational and financial difficulties may lead to a delay. (Note: Mission officials met with the JMST and donor representatives on June 11 and 12. Norway has pledged approximately 150,000 dollars for the SPLM conference, and Post has submitted to Washington a proposed budget for initial U.S. support of approximately the same amount. The TFD estimates the total cost of the conference to be 1.3 million dollars. In a meeting on June 12 with the TFD, donors reiterated their support for the SPLM initiative but requested more specific information from the Taskforce on specific budget lines. The SPLM will circulate a more detailed budget on June 13. End note.)

SPLM Supports CHD

¶9. (SBU) Amum endorsed the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue's proposal to facilitate greater cohesion within the SLA. Stating that CHD's plans "definitely complement" the SPLM's work and that the SPLM "supports" CHD's efforts, Amum said that the SPLM will encourage the factions of the SLA to attend CHD's proposed meeting in Nairobi. He said the TFD would coordinate with CHD and would send its own representatives to the Nairobi meeting. Amum did, however, warn against a proliferation of non-governmental initiatives, saying they could become a "circus". (Note: A CHD representative arrived in Juba on June 11, attended the preparatory meeting, and will meet with the SPLM on June 12. End note.)

UN/AU, Regional Mediation

¶8. (SBU) Amum described his view of two competing mediation initiatives that would follow the SPLM conference: the UN/AU and the "regional initiative" comprised of Chad, Libya, and Eritrea. He said that the regional actors have important leverage that the UN/AU

and the international community should recognize. He called on the parties to resolve the potential tension between the two initiatives, coordinate their efforts, and focus on the goal of bringing peace to Darfur.